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TAGS: PREL SO ET AU

SUBJECT: SOMALIA: AMBASSADOR TO ETHIOPIA AND THE AU GIVES VIEWS

Classified By: CHARGE D'AFFAIRES VICKI HUDDLESTON. REASON:
1.4 (B) AND (D)

¶11. (C) Summary: Success in restoring governance in Somalia requires isolation of Mogadishu armed elements, Somalia's Ambassador to Ethiopia and the African Union (AU) Abdulkarim Farai told guests at an informal AU Partners Group dinner April 3. Farai also said that Somalia has signed agreements with several governments in the region recognizing the unity of Somalia. Somalia PM Ghedi was also in Addis for the inauguration of Somalia's embassy after 15 years of closure.
End summary.

ISOLATE MOGADISHU TO GIVE TFI'S A CHANCE

¶12. (C) Amb. Farai said that the transitional federal parliament in Baidoa is working on legislation to empower the transitional federal institutions (TFIs), but a process to isolate the "four trouble makers" in Mogadishu needs to proceed in parallel. Farai noted that the presence of these individuals undermines Somali confidence in the TFIs. The fact that Mogadishu warlords possess sophisticated weaponry shows that the UN arms embargo has failed, Farai stated.
(Note: It is unclear to what extent Farai's views match that of President Yusuf or PM Ghedi. End note).

¶13. (C) Farai said that isolating Mogadishu by sealing roads leading to the city will help deprive negative elements of support. He reported that the Chinese in particular have a lucrative trading route into Mogadishu, and that China is also planning a railway to link Addis Ababa and Mogadishu. While expressing conviction that some type of IGAD-led mission is necessary, he said that training and equipping 6,000 demobilized militia would be preferable to sending in a large outside force. According to Farai, who said he is from the Hawiye clan, Mogadishu is the only problem and the climate in Somalia is otherwise favorable to restoration of governance. Farai noted that the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) is working with IGAD and the AU to develop a security and stabilization plan in response to UNSC request, and that the document would soon be completed.

¶14. (C) Farai said that Mogadishu armed elements prosper from chaos and would prefer to put an end to the TFG, which is why President Yusuf cannot yet move back to Mogadishu. Farai brushed aside an Egyptian guest's suggestion that current fighting in Mogadishu is USG-instigated. He simply said that the U.S. has a valid interest in tracking terrorist activity in Somalia.

KEEPING SOMALIA UNITED

¶ 15. (C) On Somaliland independence, Farai said that Somalia has signed agreements with Ethiopia, Kenya, Yemen, and Djibouti affirming these countries' commitment to a united Somalia. (Note: Views at the AU Commission on Somaliland's request for AU membership are divergent. Deputy Chairperson Mazimhaka and Somalia Desk Officer Kambduzi refer to a legal process potentially involving an AU member state's sponsorship of the Somaliland case for consideration at an AU Summit, while Peace and Security Commissioner Djinnit states that Somaliland will not get AU support for independence because the AU does not want to set off a chain reaction of independence claims across the continent. End note).

SOMALIA OPENS EMBASSY TO ETHIOPIA AND THE AU

¶ 16. (C) While Amb. Farai has been in Addis to represent Somalia at the AU for some time, Somali PM Ghedi traveled to Addis to officially inaugurate Somalia's embassy to Ethiopia and the AU April 4, ending its 15-year closure. According to press reports of the event, Ethiopian FM Seyoum said that Ethiopia plans to open an embassy in Jowhar, Somalia.

¶ 17. (C) Bio note: According to the Norwegian host of the AU Partners Group dinner, Farai spent 22 years in London as a businessman prior to his assignment in Ethiopia.

HUDDLESTON